

'Grass Roots' "Turf Tips"- Winterizing Your Mower

While most except in the warmest regions have stopped mowing by now, you want to make sure that most of the leaves are removed from the lawn, either through mulching them with the mower or raking and removing. Wet, caked-on leaves left all winter can keep the lawn from drying out at all and can harbor cold-season lawn fungi. Helpful tips for winter prep can be found [here](#).

The last thing a lot of people want to do this time of year is think about properly winterizing their mower for spring, but a little time spent on maintenance now will lead to less headaches when it's time to mow again in springtime:

- Make sure the mower deck is clean. Ideally, you should be washing the mower deck after every mowing to keep it clean. It is recommended that you wash the mower on either your lawn, gravel, or some other impervious surface to keep clippings and any residual oil or fuel from washing down the street into a storm drain.
- Plan to run the gas out of the mower at the end of the season or fill the tank and add a stabilizer. As an alternative, you can siphon the remaining gas and use it in a snow thrower, but gas left in the tank for the winter will likely separate and cause problems in the spring.
- Change your mower's oil, oil filter, and air filter. Disconnect the spark plug and if you have a riding mower, disconnect the battery.
- Plan to replace or sharpen the blade over winter. Maintaining a sharp blade through the season will help to provide a crisp cut and "smart" appearance for your lawn.
- Check your operator's manual for additional recommended maintenance to conduct over the winter. Check for loose belts and missing or damaged parts and repair, as needed. Store in a dry, cool place for the winter.
- For more helpful tips on winterizing lawn and landscape power equipment from 'Grass Roots' sponsors Outdoor Power Equipment Institute and STIHL, visit www.stihlusablog.com/2015/09/fuel-tips-from-opei.html



Cleaning your mower on grass or gravel helps prevent clippings and other debris from washing